Section III: Managing Effectively

Planning Meetings

Planning Meetings

Organized meetings are the key to a successful partnership. The frequency of meetings should be determined by the members. Considerations must be given to the frequency of meetings, a regularly scheduled meeting date, and a well-planned agenda for each meeting.

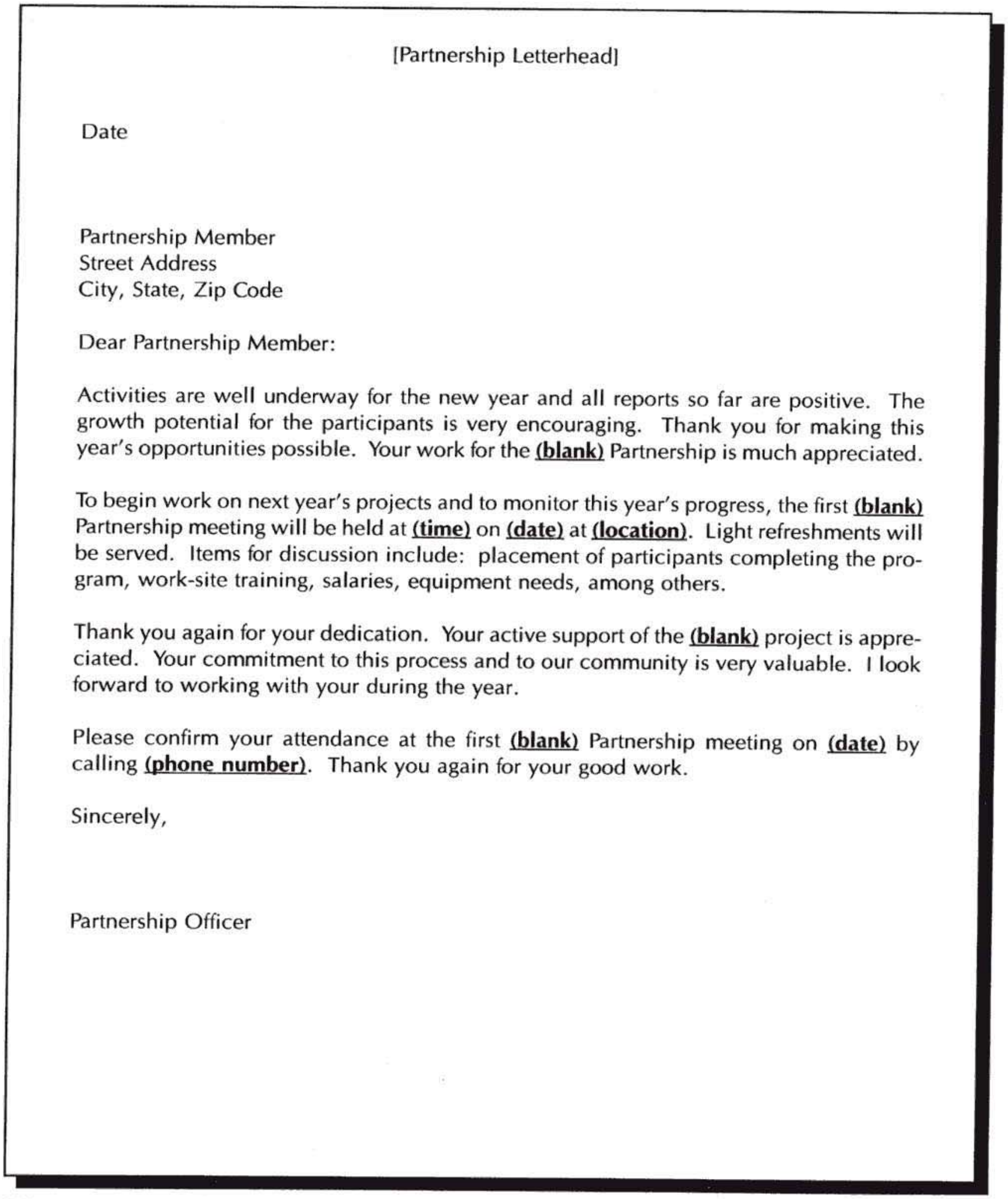
Members should be notified of the established meeting date well in advance. See Figure 3.1 for a sample letter notifying members of a meeting. The recorder should send members a written reminder of the meeting along with a proposed agenda. In addition, a phone call or personal contact either before or after the written reminder is an effective memory jog and encourages attendance.

The management team usually prepares the agenda (Figure 3.2). Agendas should be sent to members prior to the meeting to spark interest and allow members time to think about the upcoming discussion items and bring any materials that may be needed.

Agenda items should include:
- Roll call
- Approval of previous minutes
- Introduction of guests
- Financial Report, if any
- Old business summarization
- New business and reports of special interest
- Miscellaneous discussion
- Adjournment

The recorder often uses the agenda as a tool for organizing the minutes. Minutes generally include a listing of those who attended the meeting, a summary of each issue that was discussed, and any decisions or recommendations that were made. As the official record of the group's activities, minutes keep interested individuals and groups informed about the group's concerns, decisions, and activities. See Figure 3.3 for sample minutes.

Figure 3.1
Sample Letter Notifying Members of a Meeting



[Partnership Letterhead]

Date

Partnership Member
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Partnership Member:

Activities are well underway for the new year and all reports so far are positive. The growth potential for the participants is very encouraging. Thank you for making this year's opportunities possible. Your work for the **(blank)** Partnership is much appreciated.

To begin work on next year's projects and to monitor this year's progress, the first **(blank)** Partnership meeting will be held at **(time)** on **(date)** at **(location)**. Light refreshments will be served. Items for discussion include: placement of participants completing the program, work-site training, salaries, equipment needs, among others.

Thank you again for your dedication. Your active support of the **(blank)** project is appreciated. Your commitment to this process and to our community is very valuable. I look forward to working with your during the year.

Please confirm your attendance at the first **(blank)** Partnership meeting on **(date)** by calling **(phone number)**. Thank you again for your good work.

Sincerely,

Partnership Officer

Figure 3.2
Sample Agenda

Agenda of the (name) Partnership

Date: **Time:** 7 to 9 p.m.

Refreshments

1. **Meeting is called to order:** 7:00 p.m.
   Welcome and opening remarks by administrators.
2. **Minutes of last meeting are approved:** 7:10 p.m.
   Read minutes of last meeting; these are then approved or corrected by partnership vote.
3. **Introductions are performed, including guests:** 7:20 p.m.
   Introductions and brief biographies of partnership members and any guests.
4. **Old business is summarized:** 7:45 p.m.
5. **New business and reports of special interest are reviewed:** 7:55 p.m.
   Define, discuss, and vote on each item. Such items may include:
   - *Statement of the partnership's role:* How does it propose to be of assistance to the specific organization?
   - A brief background summary of the history of the organization and its current objectives
   - Goals and objectives of a specific program
   - Enrollment/recruitment plans for the program
   - Participant and program accomplishments
   - Participant placement
   - Visiting instructors, suggested field trips, donations to the program
   - Future plans for the growth of the program or institution
   - Budget/equipment needs
6. **Next meeting's agenda is set:** 8:45 p.m.
   Review date and time of next meeting, work of subcommittees, program needs
7. **Miscellaneous items are brought up:** 8:50 p.m.
   Announcements
8. **Call to adjourn meeting:** 8:55 p.m.

Minutes Sample

Figure 3.3
Sample Minutes

Health Occupations Advisory Committee Meeting

Date:

Members Present: Helen Chen, Chuck Dunn, Cecilia Gay, Carrie Johnson, Kris Kristoph, Karen Long, Lane Nelson, Carl Cox, and Mattie Walk
Members Absent: Elizabeth Alexander, Brad Luftus
Others Present: Phyllis Beckman, Principal of Easton Health Occupations Center

Welcome

A warm welcome was extended by Chair Long. She expressed appreciation for attendance and participation. She stressed how important the Committee's continuing support, assistance and input are to keeping the program viable and up to date. Dr. Phyllis Beckman, Principal of Easton Area Health Occupations Center, greeted the Committee. Her greeting further assured the Committee of its importance to educational goals and program vitality.

Minutes

Carl Cox read the minutes of the last meeting, and they were approved.

Old Business

No old business was brought before the Committee.

New Business

Chair Long asked the Committee to make suggestions about how it might improve or upgrade the program. The specific concern addressed was:

- What new requirements does the health field ask of entry-level employees?

Mr. Nelson indicated that a computer or data processing background would be helpful for employees of M.L. King Medical Center, since most tasks require the use of a central computer connecting all county hospitals. The need for computer training was further emphasized by Ms. Johnson of the Royal Medical Group, Inc. She indicated that an employee would be more skilled with prior computer knowledge. It was, therefore, the consensus of the Committee that computer training should be added to the Health Occupations Center program as soon as possible.

Having agreed upon the need to add computer training to the instructional program, the discussion turned to those systems most commonly found in various facilities. Brands suggested were Hewlett-Packard, IBM, and Wang. The chair was asked to appoint a subcommittee prior to the next meeting to investigate several kinds of computers and software for possible purchase.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

Meeting logistics also must be arranged. The social aspects of the meeting, such as simple refreshments, contribute to group morale and commitment. Some meetings should be held away from the school to encourage a community atmosphere. Among the logistics that should be arranged and confirmed for each meeting are the following:

- Establish and publicize time, date, and location of each meeting.
- Arrange for meeting room and equipment.
- Notify members and appropriate school officials in writing of meeting date and agenda.
- Arrange for social amenities (refreshments, meals, special presentations, etc.).
- Confirm all arrangements several days before meeting.
- Call members and staff to remind them of meeting.
- Secure and prepare necessary background materials for issues to be addressed.

Some form of meeting management must be in place to ensure a productive meeting. Often, groups adopt *Robert's Rules of Order* as the parliamentary authority or similar written rules of procedure. Other groups hold relatively informal meetings, but they follow a routine. In informal meetings, decisions or recommendations are reached by consensus. The method that works best for a group will depend on the personalities of the leadership and the dynamics of the group. The chairperson and facilitator should consistently exercise judgment and tact in steering the group to follow the agenda, reach decisions, and make recommendations where appropriate.

Effective Meeting Management

Suggestions for Effective Meeting Management

The following guidelines are useful for managing group activity and interaction at meetings:

- State the purpose of the meeting and review the agenda at the outset. Some groups set goals or objectives as a way to focus each meeting.
- Encourage all members to speak and respect the rights and opinions of each individual.
- Ask clarifying questions.
- Periodically summarize discussion and point out the connections and contradictions between points.
- Use a set procedure for decisions; encourage open and informal discussion. The majority rules, but the minority opinion must be heard.
- Consider and resolve one issue at a time.
- Explore and encourage all points of view in working toward consensus.
- Show strong interest in attendance, ideas, and the work plan.
- Distribute work assignments throughout the group.
- Make assignments and work tasks clear and specific; explain expectations, time lines and products. Discuss background of issues so that everyone shares a common understanding of the terms and importance of the problems.

- Structure the meeting to avoid wasted time. This conveys a sense of organization, purpose, and productivity.
- Keep members informed of activities and progress.
- Recognize and reward members. Even a simple thank you note is an effective reinforcement.
- Evaluate the group's work regularly.

Reminders:
- Take action.
- Don't talk too much.
- Take action.

Plan of Work

Developing a Plan of Work

An effective group is one that knows in advance that something positive will occur as a result of its work. To have something occur, the group must be goal-directed. Addressing real situations, issues, or concerns is one of the best ways to encourage attendance and participation.

Once the partnership has identified its goals, the discussion should become more specific in terms of exactly what it is the group will accomplish. These goals should be determined at the first or second meeting and developed into a formal plan of work for the year. The activities on the plan of work should then be incorporated into the agendas for each meeting.

Supportive Atmosphere

Establishing A Supportive Atmosphere

The atmosphere for interaction is especially critical because discussion is the medium through which members present views and develop findings while moving toward consensus. The most productive atmosphere in a meeting is a supportive one, and the least productive atmosphere is a defensive one. Creating a productive atmosphere is time well spent.

The tone of the year is typically set by the first or second meeting. The following ideas help establish a positive tone:
- Concentrate on establishing a friendly atmosphere, coupled with a seriousness of purpose and the background information necessary to begin the job.
- Emphasize that the members' knowledge and experience is unique and of great potential value to the program.
- Tour the facilities.
- Meet students enrolled in the education system.
- Provide the opportunity for members to begin to know each other in a social context, perhaps during a meal or social time.
- Discuss the expectations for the group's work.
- Discuss future meetings, school needs, and past work.
- Begin meetings and adjourn at the appointed times.

The chairperson should move through the agenda in a businesslike manner, allowing sufficient discussion and closure. A meeting that lasts more than two hours should be rescheduled.

Suggested Objectives and Activities

These activities are intended to generate ideas for ways to use members of a partnership for greatest benefit to the local education program.

Objectives	Suggested Activities
Assist in promoting career education in the school and community	• Provide news stories concerning career education programs to the local news media. • Participate in radio and television programs designed to promote career education. • Testify in support of career education at meetings which may be called by local and state officials, boards, and legislative groups. • Encourage other businesses to stimulate development of work experience programs. • Build interest and understanding between the school and community organizations. • Serve as a liaison between rural and urban interests. • Arrange meetings for educators to establish relationships between the schools and business and industry.
Assist in providing evaluations and recommendations	• Provide objectively written evaluations and recommendations on needed program improvements for the local board of education. • Evaluate actions concerning previous recommendations. • Evaluate effectiveness and direction of committee activities.
Provide local education agencies with written recommendations	• Prepare an annual report to the local board of education stating the observations, findings, and recommendations of the committee majority and include supportive data.
Advise on the development of short- and long-range plans for school-to-work education	• Review existing local and state board of education policies on career education. • Review local district annual and long-range (2-3 year) education plan. • Help schools set priorities for budgetary expenditures. • Review local district annual and long-range technical education plan. • Review local needs assessment and recommend actions based upon the findings. • Assist local board of education with development of program evaluation procedures.
Assist in providing current occupational information for student counseling purposes	• Establish and maintain a current library of visual aids, magazines, and books concerning career opportunities. • Provide relevant information to school personnel concerning desirable aptitudes, education, and experience which applicants need for entry-level jobs.

Reference: Clay, Ben. *Program Advisory Committees.* Topeka, KS: Washburn University-SAS, 1996.

Objectives and Activities

Objectives	Suggested Activities
Assist in determining job opportunities	• Assist in surveying manpower needs and emerging occupations. • Advise on the changing nature of the competencies in occupational fields. • Assist in placing graduates.
Assist in maintaining and improving instructional and learning experiences	• Advise on methods of instruction most appropriate for course content. • Provide tours and field experiences for students and teachers. • Identify or suggest resource personnel to enrich the instructional content. Promote student organization activities. • Conduct clinics and inservice and preservice training programs for teachers.
Evaluate the physical condition of facilities and technology of equipment	• Review existing equipment, facilities, and resources. • Review lab equipment and compare with current and future technology and industry standards. • Review lab safety program. • Review lab/room layout, space requirements, workstations, lighting, ventilation, etc., and compare with industry norms.
Analyze the course content to ensure the changing needs of the businesses and industries are known	• Review and suggest content for courses of study and standards of proficiency in areas which are essential to becoming successfully employed in a career path. • Review sequence of courses that comprise the program. • Review course outlines, occupational, program and course competencies, and workplace basic skills. • Help develop educational objectives. • Review software packages, textbooks and other supplementary materials. • Advise on the extent to which basic skills and work attitudes should be taught. • Review career exploration and awareness courses. • Recommend standards for work-based learning experiences and programs. • Inform the school of opportunities to place students in full- or part-time jobs as part of their School-to-Work transition program.

Reference: Clay, Ben. *Program Advisory Committees*. Topeka, KS: Washburn University-SAS, 1996.

Suggested Activities

Suggested Activities for the First and Second Meetings

The partnership's first two meetings are crucial to its overall success. Take the time to create a positive first impression by exhibiting careful planning and skillful organization and providing a sufficient amount of orientation.

One of the goals of the first meeting for a new partnership should be to conduct a needs assessment of the community that will help bring the various sectors together. From the needs assessment, develop a community profile to identify key categories of actions that could be taken to address the needs and concerns expressed by various sectors of the community. Distribute the profile to educators, businesspeople, and other interested parties. Begin formalizing the partnership structure. Develop working groups to address each of the key issues in the community profile. Working groups should be a mix of business owners, employees, teachers, and administrators. This bottom-up approach provides stability and gives members a sense of ownership of projects and activities.

First Meeting

First Meeting

A school district representative serves as temporary chairperson and appoints a temporary recorder. (Ideally, the Management Team would be appointed at the final meeting of the previous year.)

Introduce all persons present.

The temporary chairperson explains the purpose and functions of the partnership and the activities with which it will be concerned.

A representative of the board of education informs the group of its relationship to the district. Distribute copies of the school board's statement of policy.

A representative of the school district describes the programs in the school. The temporary chairperson may distribute a sample of rules of operations, such as:

- Time and length of meetings
- Method of notifying members
- Method of calling special meetings
- Method of developing agenda for meetings
- Establish priorities

Establish the date, time, and place of the next meeting indicating that permanent officers will be elected at that time.

Provide a tour of the facilities.

Second Meeting

Second Meeting

Temporary chairperson calls meeting to order.

Roll call by temporary recorder.

Approval of Minutes.

Election of permanent officers; temporary officers serve until end of meeting.

Adopt operational guidelines.

Determine permanent rules of operation including meeting time, place, and dates.

Plan long-range program of work.

Set up priority areas to be considered.

Assess program components and requirements; make recommendations.

Establish working groups to assess the program components (optional).

Arrange for Management Team meeting before next regular meeting.

Suggestions

Presenting and Responding to Suggestions

Presentation of suggestions should:

- Be brief, clear and concise.
- Tell the school/program instructor(s) the specific action the committee wants considered.
- Be preceded by a rationale.
- Be viewed as advisory in nature.

Administrative Response

Administrative Response to Suggestions

Partnership input is important and valued. School officials should take the time and effort to review and consider their suggestions and respond accordingly. The official response to suggestions should be written and sent to the partnership as soon as possible. Any denial of a suggestion should include the administration's reasons and alternatives for meeting the intent of the suggestion.

Responses may take one of the following forms:

- Adoption of the suggestion(s) as presented.
- Adoption of the suggestion(s) with modification (reasons for the modification should be reported).
- Rejection of the suggestion(s) with the reasons for the rejection.

Evaluation

Evaluating Effectiveness

A periodic review of the group and its activities can help determine the:

- Extent to which the group is accomplishing its goals.
- Extent to which the recommendations and actions have strengthened the education program.
- Future direction and activities for the committee.

This review can be either formal or informal. The goal of the review is to help the committee determine its overall effectiveness.